

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 /091 W
-----007897 060353Z /64
R 051843Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7384
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 06170

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV GW WB
SUBJECT: PROPOSED INVITATION FOR BONN DIPLOMATIC CORPS
TO VISIT BERLIN

REFS: (A) USBER 729; (B) USBER 722

1. THE STATEMENT BY THE FRENCH MINISTER THAT ALLIED EMBASSIES HAD POURED COLD WATER ON THE IDEA OF THE CHANCELLOR'S INVITING THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS TO BERLIN (REF A) IS INACCURATE, AT LEAST SO FAR AS THIS EMBASSY IS CONCERNED. FOR THE RECORD, THESE ARE THE FACTS CONCERNING OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED INVITATION.

2. ON MARCH 21, THE FRG BONN GROUP REP (VON BRAUNMUEHL) TELEPHONED THE ALLIED BONN GROUP REPS INDIVIDUALLY TO STATE THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAD JUST LEARNED OF THE CHANCELLOR'S DESIRE TO INVITE THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS TO ATTEND THE BERLIN THEATER FESTIVAL ON MAY 19. THE INVITATIONS, WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN PRINTED, WERE WORDED: "THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR AND THE GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN INVITE YOU...."

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3. VON BRAUNMUEHL, IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, STATED THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE WAS BRINGING THIS TO OUR ATTENTION BECAUSE OF TWO ASPECTS -- THE FACT THAT THE THREE ALLIED AMBASSADORS WOULD BE INVITED, AND THE FACT THAT THE WARSAW PACT AMBASSADORS WOULD BE INVITED. HE ASKED THAT WE LET HIM KNOW IF WE HAD ANY THOUGHTS ON THE MATTER. WHILE THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS AN

INVITATION "TO POUR COLD WATER ON THE IDEA," AS EXPRESSED BY MINISTER LANDY, WE INTERPRETED IT MORE AS A MATTER OF INFORMING US PROMPTLY ON A SUBJECT OF OBVIOUS ALLIED INTEREST. VON BRAUNMUEHL HIMSELF DID NOT HINT AT ANY FOREIGN OFFICE OBJECTIONS.

4. EMBOFF EXPRESSED AS HIS INITIAL REACTION THAT THE US WOULD NOT EXPRESS ANY OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSAL. AFTER INTERNAL CONSIDERATION IN THE EMBASSY, WE TELEPHONED VON BRAUNMUEHL ON MARCH 28 (AFTER THE LONG EASTER WEEKEND) TO CONFIRM THIS INITIAL POSITION. OUR VIEW WAS BASED ON THE FACT THAT, WHILE THE CHANCELLOR'S INVITATION OBVIOUSLY HAD A DEMONSTRATIVE CHARACTER TO IT, IT WAS NEITHER ILLEGAL NOR HARMFUL. WE CONSIDERED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ARRANGES EXCURSIONS FOR THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS TO VARIOUS PLACES IN THE FRG AND THAT THE FEDERAL PRESS OFFICE HAS ANNUAL TOURS TO BERLIN FOR MILITARY ATTACHES ACCREDITED IN BONN. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN INVITATIONS FOR THE BONN-BASED CULTURAL ATTACHES TO GO TO BERLIN.

5. THE BRITISH BONN GROUP REP INFORMS US THAT THE BRITISH EMBASSY REACTION WAS THE SAME AS OUR OWN. WHEN ALLIED REPS WERE FIRST INFORMED OF THE PROPOSAL, THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 06170

FRENCH BONN GROUP REP TOLD US HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE "DEMONSTRATIVE" CHARACTER OF THE PROPOSED INVITATION AND ALSO ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE ALLIES HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED BEFORE THE INVITATIONS WERE PRINTED. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE SAID IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT THE INVITATIONS CAME UNDER THE HEADING OF REPRESENTATION BY THE FRG OF THE INTERESTS OF WEST BERLIN ABROAD AND THAT IT WAS JUSTIFIABLE ON THAT BASIS.

6. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE FRENCH HAVE INFORMED US THAT THEIR INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE WAS THAT THE INVITATION WAS LEGAL BUT THAT THEY WOULD WISH TO CONSIDER THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY THEY INFORMED THE FOREIGN OFFICE THAT THEY HAD NO OBJECTION BUT THAT THE DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO SEND THE INVITATIONS WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FRG.

7. VON BRAUNMUEHL INFORMED THE BONN GROUP ON MARCH 30 THAT IT HAD BEEN DECIDED THAT THE INVITATIONS WOULD NOT BE SENT TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. ON APRIL 5 AN EMBOFF ASKED VON BRAUNMUEHL PRIVATELY WHAT LAY BEHIND THAT DECISION. HE RESPONDED, "WE (I.E., THE FOREIGN OFFICE) CONFIDENTIAL

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KILLED IT." HE ADDED THAT THE CHANCELLOR HAD BEEN GIVEN BAD ADVICE BY OFFICIALS WHO KNEW LITTLE ABOUT BERLIN, AND THAT BY THE TIME THE BERLIN EXPERTS IN THE CHANCELLERY LEARNED ABOUT IT THE INVITATIONS HAD ALREADY BEEN PRINTED. VON BRAUNMUEHL DENIED THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAD SUGGESTED TO THE CHANCELLOR THAT THE ALLIES HAD VETOED THE IDEA. RATHER, THE ALLIED VIEW HAD BEEN CONVEYED AS ONE OF NO OBJECTIONS BUT NO ENTHUSIASM. STOESEL

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